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NEEPAWA SPEECH

REPRINTED FROM THE WINNIPEG TELEGRAM, APRIL 17, 1914



SIR RODMOND ROBLIN

Temperance Issue Analyzed

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Pointed Paragraphs from the Premier's Speech

That the so-called temperance plank in the Liberal platform is a reactionary one.

That Manitoba Liberals, while in office, were not the friends of temperance legislation.

That the Opposition have suggested no forward lines of material policy for the province.

That two-thirds vote was required under the Liberals to carry local option—one-half under the Conservatives.

That, if a general vote were taken on "Banish the Bar," local option would cease to exist in every district where it had been carried.

That the liquor license law and its administration, under the Liberals in Manitoba, was a "wide open" policy and a disgrace to the province.

That the Manitoba Liberals, when in power, had an instruction from the electorate, four to one in favor of prohibition, but treated it as a joke.

That he honestly believed that no government in Canada could show a record more commendable, or more progressive, along temperance lines.

That he, personally, had given his assistance, as far as he was able, financially, to aid in the carrying of the referendum already referred to.

That the local option districts should, instead of adopting the suggestions of the Liberal party, stand by the victories they had already won.

That, during the life of the government of which he was the head, the municipalities in which local option is in force have increased over 200 per cent.

That the government of which he is the head had declared, of its own volition, absolute prohibition over 180,000 square miles of the newer territory of the province.

That there never was a time in the history of the province when the situation, so far as temperance progress was concerned, was so acute and dangerous as at present.

That the Liberal convention, recently held, had found it impossible to make any criticism of or objection to over a dozen of the principal lines of policy of the government.

That the Conservative government had drafted a prohibition act so excellent that it had been looked upon as a model, and had submitted it to the people for their approval.

That beginning with the year 1900, one year after reaching office, the Conservative party have practically, each year, passed important laws for the advancement of the temperance cause.

That he had no fear of the verdict of the people. He had done his duty and faithfully performed his part, and he had absolute confidence in the good judgment and fairmindedness of the electors of his adopted province which, for over a third of a century, he had endeavored to serve.

That the Conservative party of the province of Manitoba had been the party which had promoted and passed legislation vigorously in the interests of temperance in the past, would continue to do so in the future, and that to that end he invited the assistance and sympathy of all who, like himself, were interested in the cause.

LUCID ANALYSIS OF TEMPERANCE ISSUE BY PREMIER ROBLIN

Banquet at Neepawa Made the Occasion for Powerful Address on the History of Legislation in Manitoba Concerning Liquor Regulation — Conservative Party's Record One of Sane Restriction — Liberal Party Arraigned—Policy of the Roblin Government, Past and Future

(Telegram Staff Correspondence)

NEEPAWA, Man., April 16.—A direct and decisive refutation of the charges of inconsistency, laid by the temperance Liberals of Manitoba, was made by Sir Rodmond Roblin, in an able and eloquent address made here, tonight, at the banquet in honor of Hon. J. H. Howden. The premier was never in better form, and the manner in which he presented an undisputable array of facts to the large and representative audience, created an unbounded enthusiasm. When called upon to speak Sir Rodmond was treated to an ovation that would be flattering to any man, he was frequently interrupted by outbursts of applause, and at the conclusion of an address, lasting nearly two hours, the immense gathering rose, and cheered and clapped for nearly five minutes.

Great Crowd Present

Seldom has there been such a gathering in the town of Neepawa as that which packed the Opera House to overflowing tonight. The seats were removed from the lower floors, and tables set for the complimentary banquet to Mr. Howden and Hon. Arthur Meighen. Unfortunately, Mr. Meighen

was unable to be present, and was forced to send his regrets. Over 300 representative citizens of Neepawa and the surrounding districts occupied places at the tables, and many were unable to gain places. In addition, a crowd of upwards of 200 packed the gallery of the theatre, and from that point of vantage sat until after midnight listening to the speeches.

In the afternoon an enthusiastic convention had once more nominated Mr. Howden as the Conservative standard bearer for the electorate division of Beautiful Plains. This brought in many representatives from the outermost points of the constituency, all of whom stayed for the banquet in the evening.

At the Guest Table

Robert Davidson, president of the Conservative association, presided, and on either hand were seated Sir Rodmond Roblin, Hon. J. H. Howden, Hon. George R. Coldwell and E. L. Taylor, M.P.P. Others, at the guest table, were J. J. Hamilton, Dr. Poole, R. A. McKee, Rev. Mr. Spence, Rev. H. S. Crozier, Rev. Mr. Pitts, J. A. Bracken, W. J. Doble, A. J. McConnell, Captain Sheppard, Portage la Prairie, and A. Singleton.

Regret at being unable to be present was contained in a telegram read to the gathering by President Davidson from Hon. Arthur Meighen. Urgent public business prevented Mr. Meighen from being in Neepawa, but he expressed the hope that he would be able to address his friends at an early date.

Ovation for Hon. Mr. Howden

Hon. J. H. Howden, was accorded an ovation when called upon to reply to the toast to "Our Guests," the ovation he received left no doubt as to his

popularity with the electors of Beautiful Plains and assured him a whole-hearted support at the polls.

It was not going to speak of what he himself had done, but of what the people had accomplished. Twenty-two years ago this was not the populated and prosperous portion of the province that it is today. Then there were thickly settled places to the north and west but this district had not commenced to develop. The whole district is well settled now and here are some of the most prosperous farmers with some of the best farms and equipment in the province. Then the town was small, but the business men went ahead and did things and there are today all the conveniences of the city here.

The farmers began producing, but without facilities this would have been of little use. Railway facilities came through what is known as the Roblin railway policy. Today instead of having but one train a day this town now has nine passenger trains every day. Also there are very few farmers who have not got a railway station

close to their doors. All this is due to the progressive policy of Sir Rodmond Roblin. Had the late government remained in office this development would not have taken place, because the Greenway government had sold out to the C.P.R.

Educational Policy

The educational policy of the government was briefly discussed by Hon. Mr. Coldwell. Owing to the late hour Mr. Coldwell was unable to go very fully into the matter, touching only upon a few points.

There was, he said, no more important work than the management and development of the educational interests of the province. During the past few years a good deal of adverse criticism has been heard about the education policy. He did not think he was any the worse for it or was the policy any the worse.

E. L. Taylor, M.P.P., and E. Singleton also spoke briefly.

PREMIER'S ADDRESS

NEEPAWA, Man., April 16.—(Special.)—Sir Rodmond Roblin's comprehensive analysis of the temperance issue and the history of legislation restricting the liquor traffic in Manitoba elicited continuous applause. It was probably the most exhaustive treatment of the subject ever attempted in this province, and is a record for clearness of conception. He said:

PREMIER'S SPEECH IN DETAIL

Mr. chairman, I thank you for the manifestation of kindness and good will which you have just demonstrated in so enthusiastic a manner. It is some little time since I last had the honor of delivering a public address in Neepawa, but I have not forgotten the many times I have been the recipient of the hospitality of the people of Neepawa and surrounding country in the last twenty-five years.

The opportunity to be present tonight I gladly accepted as I had a desire to meet the people of this district again. The circumstances for which we meet are peculiarly pleasing to me.

PURPOSE OF THE GATHERING

The purpose and occasion is to do honor not only to a citizen of your town and the representative of your electoral division, but also to the attorney-general of this province. It is as I have intimated, a great pleasure for me to be permitted to have a part in any demonstration in which a tribute of honor is to be paid to so worthy a citizen and public man as the Honorable Mr. Howden. I need not speak here, where the better part of his life has been spent, of his private virtues or even of his public services.

CREDIT TO THE PROVINCE

You know them as well as I do. The province is under obligation to you for giving him to the public service of Manitoba. I trust, as I firmly believe, that he will be returned at the next election if not by acclamation at least by a majority so substantial as will justify the belief that the people have a full appreciation of his sterling qualities and ability as a representative and as a public man.

FOLLY OF THE OPPOSITION

Mr. chairman, I have been absent from this province for nearly two months. I am told that in my absence much has been said and some things have been done. It has come to me that my friends of the opposition, the Liberals of the province, have even gone so far as to have unhorsed me as the leader of the Conservative party, have theoretically established their own leader in the position of premier, and have undertaken to say what the legislation of the country shall be in the future.

I may tell you I have not worried over these reports; I am not now worrying—I was going to say not given very much serious thought even to what they have said or what they have done.

I may say for the information of the public as well as my friends and supporters that before they can occupy the place in which I have so often been confirmed by the electorate there must be a general election in this province, and I want to further say that under the law the present legislature does not expire until August, 1915, so that it will take, if the legislature is to run its course, something like a year and three months or more before they can even test public opinion, and even then I fancy they will admit that I will have to be consulted. Personally I am not worrying, and I do not think my friends need worry, because when the election is called full and due notice will be given.

THAT TEMPERANCE CONVENTION

I am told also that my friends and co-workers in temperance in this province have met in convention and deliberated as to the best means of promoting temperance, sobriety, and good citizenship in Manitoba. It is pleasing to me as a temperance man to know that there is sufficient interest among the people to make sacrifices in money and time to hold such a convention for such a purpose.

Our friends, the Liberals, have also held a convention, provincial in its character, and I am told they came up one thousand strong, the strongest, best, and most capable men of their party being present. They sat in session for two days or more, and produced a platform which they submit to the people of the province for endorsement and approval.

COMPLIMENTED BY PLATFORM

Mr. chairman, I have read that platform, I have read the report as given in their newspaper of the convention and I want to say tonight with becoming modesty, that while I have been the recipient of many complimentary statements and resolutions by political and other friends, yet I never had in my public life so complimentary a declaration of the public policy of the Conservative party as the records of that Liberal convention show.

NOT A SURPRISE

I may say that I am not surprised in a sense, because as a matter of fact, it was not possible for them to make any declaration that would appeal to the judgment and reason of the electors of this province except along the lines that I have indicated. I say that no Conservative association in this province could pass a resolution, I care not how clever the man who might be set to draft it would be, that would convey so much of the compliment as the declaration of that convention.

NO CRITICISM OF POLICY

I have it before me as published in the Free Press of March 30. And what do we find? The Conservative party of this province and the people of the world are virtually told by the findings of that convention that the financial policy, the transportation policy, the flag policy, the good roads policy, the agricultural policy, the immigration policy, the elevator policy, the telephone policy, the progressive policy of construction of public buildings, the policy of the enlargement of the boundaries of the province, the university policy, our policy of making electoral lists—every one is so absolutely satisfactory that practically not a word or line of criticism or promised improvement is to be found in their platform.

MATTER OF PRIDE FOR PARTY

Is this not something that justifies every supporter of the government in this province in swelling with pride to think that one thousand of their best men in convention could not draft a line of criticism nor frame a plank suggesting improvement upon all of these practical and important things that make for provincial and national greatness? I am sure that my friends will pardon me if in this fact I show an unusual degree of pleasure and satisfaction.

AS TO THAT PLATFORM

Now what is their platform? Have you examined it in the light of reason, judgment, and the conditions of this province coupled with our hopes and aspirations for future expansion and development of that great territory from the 49th line to the tidal waters of Hudson's Bay?

I am not personally grievously disappointed. I am intensely in love with my adopted province, and am always on the look out for something that will foster our interests, develop our resources, and add wealth and prosperity both to the individual and to Manitoba. But I am pleased to realize that the Liberal party of this province cannot conceive or suggest any improvements along these material lines which I have suggested.

LIBERALS CANNOT IMPROVE IT

I submit this phase of the question to the farmers, the professional men, the financial institutions, the industrial concerns, and the business men generally of this province, and ask them

to take note of the fact that our friends, the Liberals, cannot promise to improve even on one of our progressive policies, much less suggest anything new.

REALLY SOCIALISTIC

Their platform really is a socialistic one. One or two planks I confess, even with my long experience as a public man, I do not understand. Of course, the men in charge of that convention were without experience; they have not any knowledge of the administration of public affairs; they necessarily and naturally are superficial, and consequently cannot be blamed if they have, even out of the Socialistic material they used, made a very wobbly structure.

SOME OF THE FADS

I do understand direct legislation and women's suffrage, and a friend of mine on my return in discussing it said, "all that was needed to make the Liberal platform complete as a Republican concern was marriage as a civil contract and police court divorces, then it would be complete." However, I am not going to deal generally even with the socialistic side of the platform tonight, but there is one declaration they make that I wish to deal with, and that is the matter of temperance reform and general legislation along that line.

HYSTERIA IN CONVENTION

Before dealing with that specifically I just want to make reference to the temperance convention held in my absence. I understand it was largely attended, and have no doubt many sincere and honest temperance advocates were there, and I am exceedingly sorry to have it reported to me that in the deliberations and among the incidents one innocent but hysterical woman cried out in a moment of frenzy, "Never mind, about abolishing the bar, let us abolish Roblin," and this met with applause, I am told by a newspaper reporter, from 30 to 40 per cent. of that great meeting.

TEMPERANCE NOT THE MOTIVE

I am willing to admit that she was a feeble-minded person who could not influence or harm anyone in so far as she was concerned. But the fact that a feeble-minded woman moved by hysteria could find a response from any considerable extent of that audience called together for the purpose of advancing temperance, is to my mind to be regretted. It indicates that the cause of temperance was not the main motive for that part of the audience, at least, that here was underneath the cloak of temperance a stiletto concealed for the purpose of injuring a political opponent.

MATTER OF REGRET

I say this is to be regretted and history and experience teaches that inflammatory appeals, whether made from the pulpit, the platform or in the press, or on the street corner are dangerous. I have only to remind you

that the cause of that feeble-minded man who attempted to take the life of ex-President Roosevelt in Milwaukee about 18 months ago, was directly attributable to the unscrupulous and unfair criticism that was made upon him as a public man, and this poor simple soul, who is now in an asylum, believed he was called by his Divine Maker to rid the United States of ex-President Roosevelt, by reason of the things he had read in the newspapers and had heard from the demagogues in the city of Milwaukee.

MENACE TO THE NATION

Go further, and every respectable newspaper and high-minded citizen of the United States will tell you that it was because of the inflammatory appeals that were made and the discreditable attacks of yellow journalism that caused that other feeble-minded man down in Buffalo, some years ago, to take the life of President McKinley.

INSPIRED BY SMART OUTSIDERS

Therefore, when you find men and women gathered together to promote a great moral semi-religious cause and appeals made along the line that I have indicated that have been inspired by men with design and cunning on the outside, not only injures and makes more difficult the progress of that particular cause, but it creates a danger in the citizenship of the country that no man can locate or control until after the harm is done.

I regret an expression reported to have been made from the pulpit in our part of the province and country that I am a disgrace to the public life of this province. This coming from so-called religious and moral teachers, while it does not affect me, hurts the cause in which I am deeply interested in common with temperance people everywhere in the province. I forgive men who use that type of criticism because they know not what they do in many cases, but the injury they do to any cause which they pretend to support cannot be undone.

Now tonight I want to deal as I have intimated specially with this matter of temperance. The cause of temperance has been fostered and protected and advanced steadily since the day the Conservatives took office down to the present. No one retrograde step has been taken, and as I shall show, many have been advanced.

STRENGTH OF TEMPERANCE

I say definitely that whatever strength or position of advantage the temperance people have in this province today they have received it from the Conservative party. I will go further and say that whatever of additional advancement and progress the temperance movement has in this province in the next ten years must and will come from the Conservative party.

REACTIONARY PLANK

In addition I wish to say that the temperance plank in the Liberal party is the most reactionary, retrograde

suggestion that I have seen made by any party or individual in the 15 years that we have been in office, I shall demonstrate this before I sit down. I desire firstly to show what the Liberal party did for temperance when in office and what the Conservative party has done while in office, both covering almost the same number of years. I will take the Liberal party first.

BEGINS WITH 1892

In 1892 the Liberal party publicly advocated prohibition and submitted the matter to the electors of this province for an expression of opinion.

The voters on the list at that time were 44,573.

The vote for prohibition was 18,637.

Against prohibition, 7,115; a majority of 11,522 of the votes recorded in favor of prohibition.

Over two and a half times as many voted for it. What action did the Liberals take? Absolutely nothing. They treated it as a joke. They had carried their election in 1892, and were in office for four years and allowed their promises to go by the board. The temperance people did not rest there, and they urged for another vote, and in 1898 another vote was taken.

TREATED VERDICT AS JOKE

The voters on the list were 49,301.

The vote for prohibition was 12,367.

Against 2,955, or a majority for prohibition of 9,412. Four to one, yet our Liberal friends did nothing; treated it again as a joke. Remember this, that the men who were in this convention and the controlling spirit of it are the men who were the controlling spirit in the Liberal party at that particular time. Consequently we have the same men to deal with that we had at that particular time.

WHAT THE CONSERVATIVES DID

Now, let us go further. When the Conservatives came into office in this province there was practically no control of the liquor license trade in Manitoba. Liquor was sold 24 hours in the day, and seven days a week. I speak with knowledge that cannot nor will be gainsaid or disputed. Wholesale licenses were issued in rural municipalities. No conditions as to houses or rooms for the issue of the license, and what was called the restaurant or saloon license obtained. The fees for licenses were nominal.

IT WAS A "WIDE OPEN" POLICY

Free lunches and music, slot machines and all other devices to draw people were permitted in bar-rooms. Brewers were not licensed. Billiard and pool rooms were operated in licensed places without municipal control. Three-fifths or 60 per cent. of the voters required to carry local option bylaw. Bartenders without any qualification, while under the Liberal administration and even in the local option territory liquor could be taken in in any quantity by common carriers or private individuals.

THINGS CHANGED AT ONCE

That was the condition when the people returned the Conservative party

to office in December, 1899. Now what have we done? That is a question that every temperance man has the right to ask of us, and he has the right to demand an honest and complete statement; and I propose to answer that question in a chronological way so that that portion of the citizenship of the country, more especially the moral and religious teachers who have come to us in the last few years and who do not know, by virtue of not having lived here, of the steady progressive legislation that we have given each year, may be in a position to judge as to the justification for the condemnation that is heaped upon myself and others by the partisan clergy and others.

BEGINS WITH 1900

Now I have stated what the condition was when we came into office. We took office and assumed control of affairs in 1900. What did we do as temperance men? We had promised a prohibition act in our platform and in our speeches. We drafted a prohibition act that is a model today for other provinces who want similar legislation. We tested its legality and then we said to the people, "Here is total prohibition, and if you vote for it it will be the law of the province."

PREMIER STOOD FIRM

When we did that a meeting of temperance people was convened in Grace church in the city of Winnipeg, and while I was not there, I am told they nearly tore the church down when the suggestion was made that this course be adopted and approved by the temperance forces. I stood by my guns; I believe that no advanced legislation of that kind could be effective and produce the results we desired unless we had a majority of the people behind us. We carried it to the polls and there were 74,477 voters on the list. 22,464 voted against it and 15,607 voted for the bill, a majority against it of 6,857.

POLICY TO IGNORE

The slogan at that time was not "abolish the bar," but it was "ignore, ignore, ignore!" That they did to a large extent. It was exactly what the liquor interest wanted. The licensed victuallers patted them on the back and said, "Roblin has done wrong, you ignore the bill, and we will go out and kill it," which they did by a majority that I have shown you.

I did what I could in financing that referendum out of my private funds, and J. K. McClellan of the town of Treherne, a Liberal, but an honest temperance man, will bear testimony that I paid my share of what it cost to the leaders of the temperance movement who were asking the people to endorse that prohibition.

The bill being defeated, of course was dropped. That was in 1902, as I have stated, we submitted our referendum for prohibition.

IN 1904 SALOON ABOLISHED

In 1904 we abolished restaurant or saloon licenses; we provided that only

one license in town or village should be held by one person; that **no wholesale license be granted in rural municipalities.**

Full view of bar-room from outside. Interdicted persons to tell where they got liquor.

1905, WHOLESALERS RESTRICTED

No more wholesale licenses except in cities or towns.

Hotels in Winnipeg to have at least 50 furnished bedrooms.

In cities and towns of less than 10,000 and over 5,000 to have at least 30 furnished bedrooms.

Winnipeg limited to one hotel license for every 1,200 of population.

In other cities and towns and incorporated villages two for the first 500, one for the next 500 and one for each additional 500 population.

Increased the schedule of license fees.

License may be cancelled if liquor is served in basement or below the street level.

Free luncheons in bar-rooms forbidden.

Heavy penalty for giving liquor to interdicts.

Any license to females prohibited.

Three convictions of license to operate as forfeiture of license for three years.

1906, BREWERS LICENSED

Brewers required to take out licenses. No connection of liquor shop with brewery.

No more wholesale licenses north of the C.P.R. track in Winnipeg.

Restriction of area in Winnipeg within which licenses may be granted.

Billiard and poolrooms on licensed premises to be closed in accordance with municipal bylaws.

Persons under 18 years of age not allowed to frequent poolrooms on licensed premises.

MAJORITY VOTE IN 1908

A majority vote can carry local option instead of three-fourths as formerly.

Local option to follow territory if latter is changed.

No stairway or other connection with basement or cellar underneath.

No speaking tube, wire or signal device between bar room and other part of licensed premises.

No singing, concert, or entertainment to be allowed in any bar room.

Penalties increased for selling liquor during prohibited hours.

LIMITATIONS ON DRUGGISTS

Druggists limited to selling liquor in quantities of 16 ounces, and then only strictly for medicinal purposes.

Habitual drunkards may be committed to jail.

Bartenders must be licensed.

Division of fine with municipalities. Absolute and complete provisions for total prohibition by local option.

Only druggists licensed to sell liquor and then for medicinal purposes.

No liquor to be kept or given other than in private dwelling houses.

All sale of liquor absolutely forbidden.

No canvassing for sale of liquor for delivery in local option territory.

No liquor to be conveyed into local option territory by any common carrier.

IN 1909, NEW LAWS

Local option bylaws to be submitted at annual municipal elections in order to secure full expression of opinion.

No interdict to enter bar room.

IN 1910, FURTHER RESTRICTION

Recommendation of at least 16 out of 20 householders required outside cities and in towns over 2,000 population.

Chief license inspector given power to suspend license if house not properly kept.

License commissioners may cancel license for cause.

1912 MARKS PROGRESS

Licensees to make return of number of bartenders employed.

License fees substantially increased.

IN 1914

No liquor to be sold in clubs between 12 at night and 8 in the morning.

No bar to be maintained upon club premises.

Every club shall serve meals.

No gambling on premises.

Heavy penalties for violation of the law.

No technicalities to render invalid local option bylaws.

Local option extended to the unorganized territory of the province.

Under the statutes of the province police officers are officers under the license act to secure observance of its provisions.

Now, sir, I submit this record covering some 14 or 15 years as an evidence of sane, practical, progressive temperance legislation. I ask the genuinely honest temperance man if he does not think that it is something for which we as a party deserve credit?

I ask the electors whether any government in this Dominion has a better record as to progressive temperance legislation? (Applause.)

In addition I want to add this—that when we came into office the following rural municipalities were under local option, Argyle, Arthur, Birtle, Brenda, Edward, Elton, Lansdowne, Minnola, North Norfolk, Pipestone, Riverside, Whitehead. These are still under local option, numbering 12.

LOCAL OPTION MUNICIPALITIES

Let me say that today the following municipalities not only have local option, or the veto as it is called, but have prohibition. But beyond those let me add that under the old law, the Liberal law, all that the local option provided was that no license would be granted, liquor could be taken in, individuals could be canvassed for their trade, and persons and travellers could take in bottles, cases or casks without violating the law.

Today, as I have pointed out, no man can carry a bottle of whisky into a local vote district, nor can a common carrier take it in without being subject to penalties of a very severe kind. Now let us see what progress we have made in so far as adding to the local option districts.

WHERE LIQUOR IS PROSCRIBED

The following are the names of the municipalities: Albert, Argyle, Arthur, Blifrost, Birtle Town, Brenda, Cameron, Dufferin, Edward, Ellice, Elton, Hamiota, Hartney, Langford, Lansdowne, Macdonald, Louise, Minnola, Minitonas, Morton, North Norfolk, South Norfolk, Odanah, Pipestone, Riverside, Roland, Rosendale, Rossburn, Shoal Lake, Silver Creek, Swan River, Wallace, Whitehead, Winchester, and Woodsworth—37. Over 200 per cent. of addition to the local option districts in so far as the municipalities are concerned, since we took office. (Cheers.) In addition to this, we lost on a recount Emerson and Shoal Lake. The King's bench set aside Carman, Daley, North Cypress, and we have only lost by repeal McCreary, Swan River, Thompson, Roblin, and Kildonan. That is our record in so far as the organized municipalities are concerned.

RESTRICTION IN THE NORTH

In addition I wish to point out that the government, of its own volition, by act of parliament, proclaimed the local option law of this province to be in force and effect over all that great area of country to the north, amounting to 180,000 square miles. In other words if you will take a map and color that portion of the province of Manitoba consisting of over 250,000 square miles red, where local option prevails you will find that more than 80 per cent. of all the area of this great province today is under local option or local prohibition. (Cheers and applause.)

THE RECORD THAT TALKS

I ask my friends who are temperance men first, for there is no advantage in my asking those who are using temperance for partisan purposes to consider the matter at all, but just those genuinely interested in temperance to tell me either by public expression or private communication if they do not think that the Conservative party in this province, after they have compared it with every other province in the Dominion, has the most progressive temperance policy in the Dominion of Canada.

NAILS FALSEHOOD

I notice that it has become the fashion for the irresponsible speakers upon Liberal platforms, led by a press that is inspired by partisan malice and hatred, to declare that there is a close alliance between myself and my government upon the one hand and the liquor interests of this province on the other. Sir, the man that makes any such statement is a falsifier and the truth is not in him. Neither myself nor the government of which I have

the honor to be the head, ever has been, or ever will be in league with the liquor interests in this province. And there lives not a man in this province who can produce one jot or tittle of evidence that would be accepted by any judge or jury in the land that there exists any such alliance. Any statement of the kind is a bold, open falsehood made designedly to deceive, misinform and mislead the people.

Instead of passing legislation favorable to the liquor traffic, we have, as I have shown year by year passed legislation, the sole object of which has been to promote temperance and sobriety among the people, in every way in our power. Sir, having said so much upon this point I want to deal with the resolution in the Liberal platform and first, as it is just in this connection, I refer to their preamble which begins with the following words:

"This convention condemns the administration of the liquor license laws as grossly inefficient, corrupt and partisan," and so forth.

Now, they might just as well have said that the individual members of the government were engaged in the liquor trade in so far as facts are concerned, as to have made that statement.

I am going to call one witness, and one only as a refutation to that accusation, and I will venture the statement that they will not cross-question that witness, nor attempt to discredit his evidence. The witness I shall call is W. W. Buchanan, the recognized leader of the temperance forces of this province for many years, a gentleman who puts his temperance principles before his party bias, and accepts temperance reform and assistance from any source that it can be secured.

SUBMITS BUCHANAN'S LETTER

I believe in W. W. Buchanan's honesty as a temperance advocate. I admire his ability and his courage and his tenacity of purpose, which cannot but call forth the admiration of every honest temperance man in this province. I, therefore, submit the following letter of Mr. Buchanan's, addressed to Mr. Johnstone, chief license inspector of this province, written without solicitation, because he is a gentleman who, if approached for anything of the kind, would resent it with indignation, and that is a complete and perfect answer to the unwarranted statement that I have read:

The Moral and Social Reform
Council of Manitoba
Secretary's office,
316½ Donald street,
Winnipeg, Man.
August 23, 1913.

Mr. M. J. Johnstone,
Chief License Inspector,
Winnipeg.

Dear Mr. Johnstone,—I wish to express my thanks to you, and the great satisfaction which comes to us, over the prompt and thorough dealing of your department with the complaint of law breaking at Glenella. It is a great pleasure to

be able to speak sincerely in such superlative terms of the activity of your department.

We are doing our best to be useful to you in submitting information that will lead to convictions and help to command respect for the law, and although our complaints may sometimes be couched in the terms of business brevity, I am anxious that you shall realize that they are governed by an entirely friendly and not a critical spirit.

Very sincerely yours,
(Sgd.) W. W. BUCHANAN.

In addition to that I wish to say, but I will not weary you with reading it, he also wrote a letter along similar lines to the Hon. Mr. Howden, the guest of honor on this occasion, in connection with the same matter. That I think is sufficient to satisfy honest temperance men, and until they have discredited W. W. Buchanan, I am sure my temperance friends will throw into the waste basket such unwarranted and intemperate language as is embodied in this resolution.

ANALYSIS OF THE RESOLUTION

Now let us follow this resolution further, and find what they propose to do. They say—what? They will pass as a party no progressive legislation on the lines of prohibition. In a word all they declare for is, to use their own words, "Unqualified sympathy with the temperance cause," and pledges itself to what? If returned to power the temperance people can draft a bill to abolish the bar and submit it to the electors for their approval. If the electors endorse it then it becomes law.

CLUMSY PIECE OF CLAP-TRAP

Mr. Chairman, permit me here to say that a more clumsy piece of clap-trap never was endorsed by so large a body of intelligent men within the range of my experience. If the Liberal party be honest, they propose by an act of the legislature to take temperance and all other matters of that kind absolutely out of the hands of the legislature. They propose to destroy the legislature of this province as a deliberative body; they propose to simply make it a part of a machine to make legal what is initiated and crystalized outside. Therefore, their promise to draft a bill and submit it to the people is only, as I have stated, the cheapest kind of clap-trap, and cannot deceive an intelligent man for a second. Why do I say that? For this reason, that in the fifth plank in their platform they endorse and accept the principle of direct legislation—the initiative and referendum. (Cheers and applause.)

MENACE TO LOCAL OPTION

It follows, therefore, that if returned to power, if they be honest, and I have the right to assume they are, the first thing they will do is to destroy the powers of the legislature by vesting by act of parliament the right to

initiate and prepare and submit to the legislature bills it must pass, and then to be voted upon by the people to become law. Now you will see if they do that not only will the temperance people have the right under the statute and constitution (if they have the constitutional right to destroy the constitution, which I do not admit)—the minute they do that they open up also to the licensed victuallers of this province the same rights and opportunities to test the opinion of the public on bills they may draft.

WHAT THE PROPOSITION MEANS

In Oregon, Washington and other places where direct legislation obtains, I think 5 to 8 per cent of the electorate is necessary to compel the legislature to pass a bill and submit it for the vote of the people.

With more than one-half of the people of the province in the city of Winnipeg and suburbs, with nearly one-half of the people foreign born, and mostly from continental Europe, I need not enlarge on what that means. How easy it will be for the licensed victuallers, when direct legislation is passed, to compel the legislature of the province to submit it to the people and repeal our local option bylaws and open the gates as they were when we came into office and earlier.

WOULD BE DISASTROUS

They cannot say the licensed victuallers have not the means and influence at their back to prepare and press a fight, and under the conditions I have suggested the result in my opinion today would be disastrous to our cause. Therefore, I say the temperance platform of the Liberal party is rubbish. (Cheers). It is simply cheap, party clap-trap to catch the unwary, and I presume the many men who have endorsed this, but who are superficial in matters of legislation, have never seen the precipice they were being driven to by the proposed condition. There was never a time in the history of this province when the situation, so far as temperance progress is concerned, was so acute and dangerous as at present, and, therefore, the necessity for temperance men to stand together and prevent and make impossible the disappointments, discouragements and setbacks that are bound to come to the cause if our legislative institutions are disrupted and the initiative and referendum and recall are given as promised by the Liberal party.

SHOULD ALARM THE PROVINCE

Mr. Chairman, the possibilities, if not probabilities, that surround direct legislation as promised by the Liberal party should be alarming to every sincere temperance man in this province.

The Liberal party, as a matter of fact and law, do not promise, in so far as temperance is concerned, one single thing. (Vociferous applause.) Inferentially they say to the temperance people you can make use of our direct legislation, but having once passed it

all responsibility and obligation is discharged, and as a matter of fact the question of temperance would never again be the subject of any importance or interest to the legislature of Manitoba.

I think I have made this clear, and the honest and sincere temperance men of this province will see the danger that threatens, will see the possibility of losing all that we have gained in the last fifteen years, and the probability of our guns being spiked so that for years our efforts will simply be vain and abortive.

Having now shown that the matter of the temperance plank in the Liberal platform is simply so much clap-trap, or nonsense, I want to argue another side of it. In order to do so I must assume that the Liberal party will repeat themselves not only in Manitoba but in the Dominion, on the temperance question.

You will remember that in the Dominion they promised solemnly that they would submit the question of prohibition to the electorate of Canada, and abide by the result. That was done in 1898.

The vote for prohibition was 278,380
The vote against was 264,693

A clear majority of 13,687

SIR WILFRID INDIFFERENT

Sir Wilfrid, true to the traditions of the Liberal party, treated the matter with indifference, pitched the result into the wastepaper basket, and never has anything been heard of it since. (Cheers.) No, I am not going to presume for the purpose of my argument that the Liberals of this province are not going to keep their promises to the electorate as made in their platform, but they have declared, such of them as were in the legislature, that they would destroy the legislature of this province as a deliberative body and introduce what is known as direct legislation.

IF LIBERALS DID ACT

We will assume, I say, that with the responsibility of office there will come such sense of appreciation of justice, coupled with patriotism, as will compel them from doing what they promised. Then what position has the temperance plank in their platform?

Let us assume they carry it out. Now the platform simply declares that they are in sympathy with temperance reform. The leader at Whitemouth declared a few days ago that personally he was opposed to "Banish the Bar," and would not introduce such a measure in the legislature, as a government measure, on his own responsibility as first minister. (Cheers.) He said that he would allow the temperance people to prepare a bill, the legislature would pass it and a clause would be incorporated providing that it was to be submitted to a general vote of the people, and if a majority endorsed it, then it would be law (Applause and laughter).

MEANS LARGER SALES

What does that mean? It means that if carried no more liquor is to be sold retail in this province, but it is to be sold wholesale, by bottles and larger quantities! The act must necessarily have the conditions of law and fact by which the wholesale license is granted. Therefore, any section or part of Manitoba where an applicant complies with the law the authorities must grant a license to sell liquor wholesale.

I imagine I hear some one of the advocates of "abolish the bar," who are Liberals, say: "Well, you are wrong, because we will incorporate in the act a section that will exclude the operation of that law from such portions of the province as are now under local option."

NOT CONSTITUTIONAL

That statement would be all right if it were legal or constitutional. It is neither the one nor the other. Manitoba has a written constitution, and the legislature of Manitoba can no more rob or violate the provisions of her constitution than can a municipal council violate the provisions of the Municipal act. Therefore, if any such attempt were made, presumably the licensed victuallers would immediately attack the legality of the act.

It would be carried to the privy council, and any novices in law would know that from the time it left the initial court of Canada it would be declared *ultra vires*. Therefore, if they do not incorporate such a provision, it means that in every district where local option prevails today—take my own county for instance, Roland, a wholesale liquor store would be established and would sell spirits by the barrel or bottle and beer by the barrel or the bottle, which could be consumed anywhere in the district.

HAS ACCURATE KNOWLEDGE

Do not think I do not know whereof I speak. True, I am not a lawyer, but I have consulted not only recently, but some considerable time ago, men as eminent as any of the judges of this province, and everyone of them have agreed that no such law could or would be sustained. Therefore, if you legalise the bill first as proposed, you have got to include or incorporate the local option districts, which means we have lost all the advantage that we have gained in the last fifteen years. In a word the temperance clock in Manitoba would be turned back 25 years. The interests of temperance and sobriety would be not only in danger, but would be submerged with another influence such as temperance men deplore and regret. (Cheers.)

ON DANGEROUS GROUND

For these reasons, and I have not further time to amplify them tonight, you can see the dangerous ground the temperance people are asked to take at the present time. I do not feel there is much danger that the sane, sober, deliberate, intelligent, sincere temperance men will endanger the

cause by any such madness as is proposed, but I want to point it out clearly and unmistakably that if such a thing should happen, I will be able to stand on the platform and acclaim the fact that I cautioned and advised against such a policy and course as is suggested. (Applause).

Now, I want to say this further, that in addition to the splendid advancement that we have made from year to year, as you have heard tonight,

I was willing, had the temperance people been willing, to endorse the action to go further. Last session a high official of the Social and Moral Reform council called on me, and I discussed with him further legislation. He is a strong Liberal who never gave a Conservative vote in his life. I expect he will vote against me next election. But before politics he is a sincere, honest temperance advocate.

SUGGESTION OF THE PREMIER

I suggested that we introduce a bill giving each town or city in this province where there is more than one license the right to say by vote how many licenses there should be in such town or city, in other words, putting it in the hands of the people to limit the number of licenses in each city and town. He asked me to put it on paper and I wrote with my own hand a draft of what I was willing to ask the legislature to pass, if the temperance people would support me. He was strongly in favor of it himself. He went away.

In a day or two he came back. He was very much depressed. He conveyed the information to me with regret that those in charge of the organization were not disposed to favorably consider my proposition. I was discouraged myself. I felt that the temperance organization was not prepared to co-operate with me in further advanced legislation, and I, as a consequence, dropped it.

FUTILE POLITICAL TRICK

From some source it became public and then my friends of the opposition moved a resolution along that line, the temperance people having refused to take it from me. Of course I could not endorse such political manoeuvring as my political opponents were indulging in.

Later on that council met, and they wrote me a letter covering this matter, which I will read:

Federation office,
408 Builders' Exchange,
Winnipeg, Feb. 17, 1914.

The Hon. the Premier of Manitoba.

Sir:—We, the Social Service Council of Manitoba, in annual meeting assembled, desire to know the exact meaning of the offer made by you to our last delegation with respect to giving municipalities the power of reducing or extinguishing licenses for the sale of liquor throughout the province by municipal vote, and whether it is your intention to introduce legislation to carry out this offer at the present session of the legislature. We apologize for

asking for an immediate reply as our council will stand adjourned today for another year, and we wish to be in a position before we adjourn, to understand clearly your intention in the matter referred to.

(Signed) CHAS. W. GORDON,
President.
W. W. BUCHANAN,
Secretary.

P. S.—Please return answer to board room of Industrial bureau.—B.

NOT AUTHORIZED TO SUPPORT

Now, you will notice, this letter is from W. W. Buchanan, the secretary. Please notice that he is not authorized, nor does he say that he will support me in my proposed legislation. I answered as follows:

Premier's office
Feb. 17, 1914.

W. W. Buchanan Esq.,
Secretary Social Service
Council of Manitoba,
408 Builders' Exchange, City.

My Dear Mr. Buchanan:—I am in receipt of your letter of recent date, in which you ask me to define the meaning of the words used by me to a recent delegation from your organization in respect to giving municipalities the power of reducing or extinguishing licenses for the sale of liquor in this province.

What I meant and still mean is that in my opinion and in the opinion of the government public opinion is almost or quite educated to support legislation that will give to each municipality the right to decide as to the number of licenses for the sale of liquor within its boundaries, either wholesale or retail.

Legislation of this kind could be used as a part of the Local Veto law of the province, as it would place in the hands of the municipal voter in every municipality, when requested in a way that would be defined by law, the right to decide how many licenses, if any, for the sale of liquor should be authorized within the boundaries of his municipality.

I regret exceedingly that the temperance organizations of the province did not give me that support which I felt was necessary in order to justify me in passing such legislation this session. I trust that public opinion will be sufficiently crystallized by the time the house meets again to justify legislation of this kind, which I believe would be a very marked advance along the lines of temperance and moral reform.

Yours very respectfully,
(Signed) R. P. ROBLIN.

CLOSE OF THE CORRESPONDENCE

And to this day I have never had any further official correspondence with that organization. Now, you can see from this that I did not get from that organization that sympathy and that support that I required in order

to at that time pass that legislation. I may say, however, that does not lessen my determination to prosecute and press for further advanced legislation.

PARTY OF TEMPERANCE

Mr. Chairman, in conclusion, permit me to say that the Conservative party claims to be the temperance party of this province. It bases its claims on its record. I have submitted that record tonight, and I ask the moral religious teachers and those interested in temperance reform to examine it, not only take my statements as they are made, but to go to the official records and confirm them to their satisfaction. I ask them also in turn to examine the record of the Liberal party, provincial and Dominion; examine their platform that was made in Winnipeg, and submit the tests of law, fact and condition as I have outlined them, and then say if I am not justified as a temperance man in claiming the support of every man in this province, who is a temperance man before he is a party politician.

DR. C. W. GORDON'S POSITION

Rev. Charles W. Gordon, D.D. Winnipeg, is president of the Social and Moral Reform Association of this province. He has taken an interest in the public affairs for some years. I think I do not misrepresent him when I say he is politically an ardent Liberal. That is not to his discredit because every man has a right under the constitution to his political views and party affiliations. But Dr. Gordon at this juncture is more than a party politician. Dr. Gordon is more of a leader today in the Liberal party than is T. C. Norris, because he, up to the present, has assumed that the purposes he has in view can be better accomplished by making T. C. Norris premier than under my administration. (Cheers)'.

AFTER 33 YEARS IN PUBLIC

I submit with respect and yet great earnestness the case I have presented tonight to Dr. Gordon for his consideration, and if I have judgment, reason and experience after 33 years of public life in Manitoba, it is that he must, if he be true to his temperance principles, discard his political affiliation and join hands with me in forward temperance legislation. I cannot complain, I do not, of his course or attitude up to the present time in promoting the Liberal party by way of the temperance platform in that party, but I am of opinion that Dr. Gordon has not gone deep enough into the question to know the effect of the legislation he has asked for, or he could not, or would not, pursue the course he is taking at the present time.

EIGHTY PER CENT. LOCAL OPTION

As I have said, nearly 80 per cent. of this province is total prohibition today. In the older part of the province we have added more than 200 per cent. under my administration to the prohibited districts. With the same practical progressive policy in the future what can we not do in the next ten years in the way of making total prohibition for Manitoba? With the temperance party strong behind me we will not yield one inch of the territory we have captured, but each succeeding year, as they go by, we will add to that territory, municipality after municipality and town after town, until the citadel of Winnipeg itself shall be captured and the goal of all true temperance men has been reached—total prohibition. (Cheers).

NOT POSSIBLE WITH NORRIS

I say such a condition is impossible—absolutely impossible—under the policy as outlined by the Liberal platform, and as supported by my good friend, Rev. Dr. Gordon. I appeal not only to Dr. Gordon, but to all leaders of Christian, moral and temperance movements in this province to stand to their guns to yield nothing that we have captured, to make it impossible that the enemy shall gain any of the territory that is now ours, but to strengthen our position from year to year by such advanced legislation as public opinion will support. Add to the territory that we have already captured, and eventually reach that splendid goal—that is the ideal of all sincere temperance advocates.

CONFIDENCE OF THE PREMIER

Mr. Chairman, further let me say that I have no fears either for the government or the cause of temperance. I have lived among the people of Manitoba for 37 years. I have done my part, little though it may be, yet it was my best, to develop, not only the material, but the social and moral side as well, and am content that my fellow countrymen have led me to believe, that when men do their duty, when no responsibility is shirked, when judgment is exercised, when honesty characterises action, and every thought is patriotic, then I say I believe the people of Manitoba will stand behind such men and party, and believing this, I assure you that the Conservative ship "Manitoba," having sailed for fifteen years on placid waters, with favorable breezes, will again, when election day comes, sail into port with the same old skipper on the bridge, and the ship laden with not only the fruits of wise and progressive legislation of the past but with promises of even better things for the future. (Continued cheers and applause).

Editorial Comments by The Winnipeg Telegram

The speech delivered last night in Neepawa by Sir Rodmond Roblin, premier of the province, upon the question of temperance legislation, is one which should be read carefully by every citizen of Manitoba. In the first place it is a clear, concise and perfectly authenticated record of the history of the promises and performances of the two political parties in this province upon this important question in the past; and, in the second place, it is a masterful and lucid analysis of the attitude of the same two parties towards the same important question at the present time. We venture to assert that no leader of a provincial government in Canada was ever enabled to go before the people with a stronger case against his opponents, or with a better or more effective answer to his critics upon a specific matter than are to be found in Sir Rodmond's address.

There are, today, many citizens in Manitoba deeply interested in the great questions which confront us, who have been residents within the province for a comparatively short time; there are many more who, while resident here for a longer period, have, for various reasons, allowed the progress of legislation upon various subjects and the attitude of political parties thereon to pass without that close attention or examination that each deserved. A goodly portion, therefore, of the people of the province who will compose the electorate at the forthcoming election are not familiar with the history of the temperance movement in Manitoba for the past quarter of a century or more, in so far as that history has to do with legislation proposed, promised or effected by parties or governments.

To such citizens the historical facts contained in Sir Rodmond's speech will bring a large measure of surprise, not because they are facts, but that in the face of their existence the electors should be urged to prefer the opponents of the government upon their temperance legislation record, and that measure of surprise will be still further increased when their present so-called policy is seen after being subjected to Sir Rodmond's experienced, calm and logical but merciless analysis and criticism.

To say that there has been an organized and studied attempt upon the part of the political opponents of the Manitoba government to misrepresent its attitude and legislation upon the temperance question is but to mildly characterize the desperate methods to which resort has been had with the purpose of discrediting that government and its supporters. Upon such opponents Sir Rodmond's speech will have no effect.

This campaign of misrepresentation and falsehood was deliberately begun, and will be as deliberately continued to the end. It is inconceivable, however, that the real friends of temperance, once the facts are fully before them, will permit themselves to be dragged along at the heels of reckless political wire pullers, to the certain endangerment and possible destruction of every good result which has been achieved so far by temperance workers in this province.

This much is certain, that the record of the Liberal party in this province, as exposed by Sir Rodmond on the temperance question, is not one which would entitle them to the support of a single friend of temperance. They have done nothing to further the

cause of temperance and the advance which has been made along temperance lines has been the result of the legislation for which the Conservative party are responsible, and of which they are proud. This being the case the only ground upon which they have a chance to appeal for the support of temperance advocates is that which is contained in the so-called policy adopted at the recent Liberal convention.

And what is that policy? Do the honest friends of temperance understand it? Do they really appreciate what the Liberal politicians of this province are asking them to fall down and worship? The declaration of sympathy with the temperance cause so formally set forth in a resolution no one will contend means anything. An equally strong resolution could, upon request, be obtained from the Licensed Liquor Sellers' association of any province in the Dominion. This, then, may be dismissed without serious consideration as a resolution which says nothing in particular, which binds nobody to anything, and which, if useful for any purpose at all, would be useful only for the purpose of deception—a purpose for which it must be said resolutions of the kind are usually passed.

As to the remainder of the "policy" laid down by the Liberal convention, it consists of a promise that the Liberal party, if returned to power, will permit the temperance people to draft a bill to "banish the bar" (in other words, to prevent the retail sale of liquor) which shall be submitted to the voters of the province for their approval or rejection. And this is the plank of the Liberal party over which all temperance people are asked to "make merry and rejoice!" It is over this that the order has gone forth for the trumpets to be sounded loudly for "hath not the citadel fallen?"

The honest temperance man, earnest in his desire to see the cause triumphant, will not be so anxious to make merry and rejoice over this so-called policy after he has read the facts

which Sir Rodmond's speech contains. First of all, it may be said, the passing of a resolution by the Liberal convention containing any such promise to the temperance people was either the result of the blundering incapacity of stupid and inexperienced men who had no appreciation of what the resolutions they had been passing as declarations of "policy" meant, or it was a supposedly cunningly devised "sop" with which to ease the conscience of some already in the party and to catch the sympathy of some of the unwary who were outside the party. And why?

As Sir Rodmond points out, the same convention had already passed a plank of policy declaring for direct legislation—"the Initiative and the Referendum"—declaring that the moment the Liberal party secured office they would carry a statute making it possible for a very small percentage of the electors to prepare a bill upon any subject, which bill the legislature would be forced to submit to the electorate, and which, if the electorate passed it, would become the law of the province. Now, where is the cause for the rejoicing upon the part of the temperance party? Under direct legislation, as promised by the Liberal party, the temperance people would have had all and more than they obtained by this sacred and precious special promise of the Liberal party in convention assembled. More than that while the temperance people are promised the prestige of having such a bill submitted, under the same Initiative and Referendum system the liquor interests of the province would have the undoubted right—and not a Liberal politician or lawyer dares to deny the statement—to demand to have submitted not one but as many bills as they desired for the purpose of undoing what has been accomplished thus far by the combined labors and expenditures of the friends of temperance.

So that this promise so generously, so magnanimously given by the Liberal convention to the temperance people contains nothing more than

both the friends of temperance legislation and the opponents of temperance legislation could demand as a right, providing the Liberal party obtained office.

Earnest temperance men of the province, do you want the large areas now covered by local option in Manitoba to remain under the control of their own citizens, or do you want the question whether they shall remain prohibition districts or not submitted to the whole of the province for decision? If you want the latter, you will get it easily by assisting the Liberal party to put direct legislation into operation in this province.

Winnipeg, with its surrounding communities, is sufficiently populous to over-balance the rest of the province. We gravely doubt the willingness of the temperance people of local option municipalities to have their

case submitted to vote in the wider field. They have what they have now as a result of earnest effort. They are satisfied with the conditions which exist, and they are not likely to invite the probability or even the possibility of its loss for the mythical advantages promised them by a band of place-seeking politicians who are reaching out at whatever cost of principle to obtain support.

In other words, the friends of temperance in various parts of the province who have, after much effort, obtained the result of local prohibition, feel that they have something of great value at stake, and, like the business man and landowner, whether in city, town or country—the responsible citizen with vested interests—they are not satisfied to let those interests become the plaything of faddists and theorists—under the American direct legislation plan of the Liberal party